

This brochure provides only a small portion of the information available on personal safety. Patrol members regularly present programs on personal safety for women to civic groups, clubs, etc. If your group would like such a program, please contact the Public Information and Education officer at the troop headquarters nearest you or the Public Information and Education Division at (573)526-6115.

The contents of this brochure can be made available in alternate forms for the sight impaired by contacting:

*Missouri State Highway Patrol
Administrative Services Bureau
(573) 526-6110*

For the Missouri State Highway Patrol Headquarters nearest you, consult your local phone directory.



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Emergency Highway Assistance:
1-800-525-5555 or cellular *55

Road Condition Report
1-800-222-6400



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**STAND UP
TO VIOLENCE**

**Safety
for
Women**

Every hour somewhere in Missouri, four people are murdered, raped, robbed or assaulted. Many of these crimes are against women. But you don't have to be a victim. You can avoid or minimize danger by educating yourself. Learn the four "As."

The Four **As**

Be **AWARE** of your surroundings.

Be **ALERT** to any unusual activities.

AVOID any potential problem areas.

Take **ACTION** on information gained in this brochure, which is furnished by the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

In your Car

Women drivers must be cautious when traveling alone. Before getting into a car, look in the back seat to see if someone is hiding there. Have the door key in hand, and enter the car promptly. Keep the windows rolled up and all doors locked as you travel. Don't leave your purse on the passenger seat; you may be inviting a theft. Place your purse in the floor.

Try to stick to the major trafficways instead of side streets through questionable neighborhoods. This is especially true when driving at night. Try to avoid the curb lane when you stop at intersections. If someone approaches your car and attempts to get in, drive off, but watch for other cars and for pedestrians. Use commercial parking facilities whenever possible, otherwise park in a well lighted area.

Be aware of unusual traffic crashes or persons approaching your vehicle. If the situation or persons look suspicious, be cautious. It may be a car-jacking or a bump-and-rob situation. Make sure you have enough gas (a half tank or more) in your car and have your tires, oil, and water checked periodically to prevent a possible breakdown. Car breakdowns make women easy targets. Inspect or have your car checked at least every six months.

Be sure you have a properly inflated spare tire; also know how to change a tire if help is not available. You can drive on a flat tire, however, if you find yourself in a dark, unfamiliar area. It is better to drive to a safer, lighted area to change your tire.

If your vehicle does break down, stay inside and place a "SEND HELP" or "SEND POLICE" sign in your side or rear window. You are safer inside your vehicle than outside. If you see a stranded motorist displaying a "SEND HELP" sign, do not stop. Drive to the nearest telephone, and call for help. You may want to consider purchasing a cellular phone, particularly if you travel a lot.

If you are stopped by a law enforcement officer and you are suspicious, keep your doors locked and only roll down your window far enough to communicate. You can ask to see an officer's identification if you do not recognize the officer's uniform. If you are driving along a dark stretch of road when stopped by an officer, you may drive a short distance to a better lit or more populated area to stop.

EMERGENCY Phone Number
1-800-525-5555 or cellular *55

Remember

- Check the back seat of your car before entering.
- Avoid the curb lane; keep doors locked.
- Park in lighted area.
- Don't get out of your car in an emergency stop.
- Don't pick up hitchhikers.

In Your Home

Even in the comfort of her own home, a woman alone may find herself vulnerable to burglary, robbery, and sexual attack. The home can be bolstered to make it more secure. A woman's actions, however, also can go a long way toward making the home a safe place, day or night.

Care should be taken when answering the door. A peep hole, one-way mirror, or a two-way communications system can be installed in the door so you can see and/or hear who is knocking or ringing your doorbell. Never open the door automatically after a knock. Require the caller to identify himself to your satisfaction.

Be leary of strangers (men or women) who come to the door requesting help or to use your telephone. They may be looking for an opportunity to burglarize your home or to do you physical harm. Don't let them inside your home! Rather, offer to summon emergency assistance or make a call for the stranger. Again, never allow a stranger into your home.

Another rule to help insure safety in your home is to stay away from the windows when scantily clad. Close the blinds, drapes, or shades on your windows before disrobing or dressing.

A woman should not advertise she lives alone. Instead of a "Miss Mary Smith" nameplate on the mailbox, she should use "M. Smith." The same holds true for the name listing in the telephone book. If possible, have a male friend record the message on your answering machine.

Keep your home safe when you are away, even for a short period of time. Lock all entrances. Leave the drapes in the position you normally have them. Ask a friend or neighbor to pick up your mail and newspapers if you will be gone for more than a day. Have a radio and light on a timer to discourage intruders. Have your key ready in hand when you return home, and enter promptly.

- When carrying luggage, never put your full name or home address on your tags. Unwanted persons having access to your home address can create potentially dangerous situations. Use only your business address and phone number on your luggage tags.
- Always try to take care of your banking business during daylight hours. If you must use an ATM (automatic teller machine) at night, park in a well lighted area, have all your forms ready, and check the area for anything suspicious before leaving your car. Consider asking a friend to accompany you to the ATM.
- When staying in a hotel, never give your room number to a stranger. If you think someone suspicious overheard your room number, ask the front desk if you can change rooms. Never let anyone you do not know into your room. Lock up any valuables in the hotel safe; do not leave them in a drawer in your room. If a hotel employee knocks on your door and you did not request a hotel service, check with the front desk before letting them into your room.

No one wants to be a victim of crime. The responsibility belongs to all of us. Law enforcement cannot do it all. We must work together to decrease the opportunity for criminals. If you follow the information in this brochure, you can minimize your chances of being a victim of crime. Be aware and "be careful out there."

On the Street

A sad commentary of our times is that it is unsafe to walk on many of our streets — especially at night and particularly for women alone.

The best rule a woman can follow is to never walk alone at night. If you must walk alone, stay on well lighted streets as much as possible. Walk facing traffic so you can see anyone who might be driving toward you. Carry a whistle in your hand, and blow it hard if there is trouble. Always be alert. Walk with confidence, head up and looking around. You will seem less like an easy target to an attacker.

Purse snatching is a frequently committed street crime. When walking, hold your purse on your side away from the street. Purses are sometimes grabbed by people in passing vehicles. Carry any purse close to your body. Hold it firmly with your hand or arm covering the clasp. Avoid dangling your purse by the strap away from your body. Make it a practice to carry a small purse rather than a large open one.

Vary the route and time of your walk. This is another good preventative measure you should take to avoid being a crime victim. Someone may be watching your walking habits, so don't routinely walk on the same street at the same time of day. Again, walk with companions if possible, especially after dark. There is safety in numbers. **BE ALERT!**

Don't go into the "lion's den." Avoid walking in areas that have a high incidence of crime. Stay away from these areas even if it means taking the long way to your destination.

Be aware of a stranger in a vehicle offering to give you a ride. Unless you **really** know the person or persons in the vehicle, **refuse** the "helpful" offer of a ride. If anyone tries to force you into a vehicle, **scream and scream loud**, and try to run to the nearest place where there are people. Always be aware of what is going on around you. **BE ALERT!**

- Walk with a companion whenever possible.
- Walk in the middle of the sidewalk or near the curb.
- Be sure your doors and windows are locked at night.
- Check the rear seat of your car before you get behind the wheel.
- Carry change for a telephone.
- Carry a whistle in your hand when walking alone.

- Walk alone after dark.
- Accept a ride from a stranger . . . regardless.
- Pick up hitchhikers.
 - Leave your house key under the door mat.
 - Let strangers in your home.
 - Have your license plate personalized with your first name.

